

Laredo Morning Times

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2006
A HEARST NEWSPAPER

1881 125 YEARS 2006

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NUEVO LAREDO | VIOLENCE

Deadly encounters

Five die in jail escape

By VICENTE RANGEL
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

NUEVO LAREDO — Four prisoners and a visitor were killed during a daring escape from CERESO II on Tuesday afternoon that left two of the dead men near the entrance to an elementary school across the street.

About eight armed inmates made it outside the prison and ran to the school, hunkering down inside the gate, where they opened fire on guards that were trying to stop the breakout.

Between five to six men managed to escape, and they are believed to be

See ESCAPE | PAGE 13A

Police find two bodies

By MIGUEL TIMOSHENKOV
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

NUEVO LAREDO — State police found two bodies and two injured men in a house on the city's west side early Tuesday during a sweep of the neighborhood as a result of a failed ambush on federal police two hours earlier.

The injured men were taken to Hospital General at about 4:30 a.m., and less than 30 minutes later, an armed group of men charged into the emergency room and demanded to know where the wounded men were.

"They threatened the medical

See POLICE | PAGE 13A

NEWSPAPER | BIRTHDAY

125 years strong

Times celebrates significant history

By ODIE ARAMBULA
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

Today, this 14th day of June 2006, marks the 125th year of the founding of the Laredo Morning Times. On that historic day in 1881, a publication that James Saunders Penn started as a four-page newspaper (The Laredo Weekly) and doubled as a daily (Laredo Daily Times) two years later became reality.

The rest is history. One-hundred-twenty-five years later, William B. Green is the ninth publisher of a Laredo Morning Times that had its start in a corner of a downtown building on Farragut Street. Production went from handset type to the hot (lines of lead) and cold (offset) processes. It progressed to modern front-end systems that required modern technology and smarter trained hands.

The manual typewriter and paper gave way to electric machines. It went on to state-of-the-art computer technology production that relegated linotypes and lines of type to museums or scrap metal. People learned to appreciate that the Laredo Morning Times is more than your newspaper.

In that 125-year run, the afternoon Laredo Times, later to become the Laredo Morning Times, has witnessed half the span of the city's 250 years since its founding on May 15, 1755. Through good and bad times, the newspaper has played a role in a mix of frontier history about Laredo's people, places and things.

Historians continue to use the newspaper as a prime



ARAMBULA

See NEWSPAPER | PAGE 14A

INSIDE



The Laredo Morning Times turns 125 years old today. Readers can get a taste of what older editions contained with two special inside pages. We hope you find this historical piece interesting. Sincerely, LMT Staff

LAREDO | ELECTIONS

Early voting turnout high

By JULIE DAFFERN
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

Elections Administrator Oscar Villarreal admits he may have been wrong — but in a good way.

Villarreal originally predicted about 13,500 to 14,000 voters for the runoff involving one Laredo Community College race and three municipal races. But after seeing the early voting turnout, he thinks it will be closer to 18,000.

"It looks like I was wrong, but I'm glad to be wrong this way," Villarreal said. "I'd hate to predict 13,000 and we only got 7,000 out to vote."

By the end of early voting Monday, 12,586 voters had cast a ballot. Of those votes, 1,658 were cast electronically.

He said more than 600 people voted at Mall del Norte on Tuesday, and right after 5 p.m. there was a surge of callers wanting to know where they could vote.

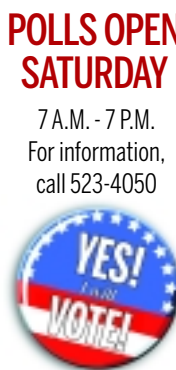
The races on the ballot are the mayoral, City Council districts 1 and 5, and LCC Place 6 races.

The election is Saturday, and the polls will be open from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Villarreal said 50 sites will be open for the election.

"After five elections, I think they should pretty much know where to go vote," he said, joking. "But as long as they go vote."

For those who haven't cast a ballot this year, Villarreal said they can still contact the Elections Office for polling places at (956) 523-4050.

(Julie Daffern may be reached at (956) 728-2538 or by e-mail at jdaffern@lmtonline.com)



LAREDO | BOOK

Novel helps author's healing

By TRICIA CORTEZ
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

The recent whirlwind of book signings across Texas has jolted Carlos Nicolás Flores from his routine of teaching and writing and his long moments of solitude.

"On the one hand, celebrity is very satisfying, but on the other hand, it's disruptive to my work as an author. I'm getting used to it," said the El Paso native and veteran English instructor at Laredo Community College.

But it can't be all that bad. After 35 years of intermittent struggles to get published, Flores finally nabbed a contract with



FLORES

free and open to the public.

The path to getting published was not easy for Flores, who had many demons to overcome, namely alcoholism

See AUTHOR | PAGE 13A



NEWSPAPER | Continued from Page 1A

source for information, telling Laredo's historic story with its charm, culture and traditions, all documented for readers and their posterity.

The rolls of the Texas Daily Newspaper Association list the Abilene Reporter-News, the El Paso Times and the Hearst-owned Laredo Morning Times with starts in 1881. Another Hearst newspaper, The Beaumont Journal-Enterprise, ran off the press for the first time in 1880.

The San Antonio Light was the flagship when William Randolph Hearst expanded his newspaper empire to Texas in 1881. The Light shut down with the Hearst acquisition of the San Antonio Express-News.

James Saunders Penn, having established a commercial printing business affiliate in San Antonio from an Austin base, recognized the economic potential when he chose to bring his publishing equipment to Laredo in 1881. His biography (obituary) says he brought his family and equipment in a wagon train, arriving on May 1, 1881.

Laredo was experiencing phenomenal growth as a major center of trade on the frontier. South of San Antonio de Bexar, the most promising communities in the region were Laredo, Corpus Christi and Brownsville.

Laredo had been settled near the banks of the Rio Grande for 126 years when the Penn family arrived. Several newspapers had already started on both sides of the border, but these publications did not maintain operations long.

When the Laredo Weekly Times published on a Ben Franklin press on June 14, 1881, Laredo had been a municipality under U.S. governance for 36 years. When the Penn family settled here, the Texas cities with the most population were Galveston, San Antonio, Dallas and Houston. The 1880 census had Laredo with 3,251 people, behind Corpus Christi and Brownsville. By the end of the 1880s, a socioeconomic boom generated in great measure by the arrival of the railroad shot Laredo's population past Corpus Christi and Brownsville.

James Saunders Penn and his Laredo Weekly/Laredo Daily Times were caught in the midst of dramatic development, marked by the arrival of newcomer families speaking English and other languages that served to alter a predominantly Spanish-Mexican culture. The post-Civil War years of

Reconstruction brought Laredo to the beginning of the decade of the 1880s, when the town had no paved streets, no electric lights, no public water system, no international bridges and no railroads.

Penn set up shop for the weekly newspaper at a downtown location that, in time, became the place for the Penn homestead on Farragut Street. All type was set by hand. The operation was weekly, turning daily two years later. Penn, nevertheless, continued publishing the weekly and the daily.

He moved the operation to space shared with a funeral home down the street on Farragut at Juarez where a mortician also maintained a horse-and-carriage service. From this service the newspaper learned the names of the daily train arrivals from Corpus Christi and San Antonio. Through the 1880s and 1890s, the front page of the Laredo Daily Times dedicated half of the space to display advertising and news matter.

One of the early editors of the Laredo Daily Times was Edward R. Tarver, whose book ("Laredo, The Gateway Between the United and Mexico"), published by the newspaper in 1890, provided an insight into the town's growth at the end of the century and the economic expectations of the early 1900s. With completion of a pedestrian, wagon and streetcar bridge across the Rio Grande, Laredo became a leading point of origin and destination for international commerce and travelers.

With the untimely death of James Saunders Penn in 1901, his son Justo S. Penn took over as publisher and general manager. The Penns, father and son, blended into the life of the Laredo community. Among other things, the two individually and as heads of the Laredo Times were key players in the development of the city's socioeconomic life. Justo S. Penn thereafter sold the newspaper to J.E. Hanway of Wyoming in July 1926.

Hanway became the third publisher of the Laredo Times with two business associates, William Prescott Allen of San Antonio and O.W. Killam of Laredo. The operation grew and prospered under Hanway's direction. He brought to Laredo experience with newspapers in Kansas, Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, and he reorganized the entire plant at a new location on Matamoros Street. He installed modern newspaper equipment, including a press,

linotype machines and backshop tools. It was under Hanway's management that Spanish was introduced to the newspaper.

The Laredo Times became the first daily newspaper in Texas to include Spanish material in its news columns and advertisements. The bilingual presentation of information was vastly improved during the Allen years.

Allen, who also published newspapers in Colorado and Alaska, improved on the Hanway initiatives. At one time, the newspaper had correspondents in major cities in Mexico like Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Saltillo. He also engaged the services of daily Spanish-language columnists and reporters in Nuevo Laredo.

Allen and his nephew Alan Tish, general manager, ran the afternoon daily. It published Monday through Friday and Sunday, until it was acquired by Jefferson Pilot in 1969-70. James H. Hale became publisher in 1970. Moving to Clearwater, Fla., to take over the Clearwater Sun, Hale left Laredo in October 1971 when The Times moved to its present location on Esperanza Drive in north Laredo.

Baker was succeeded by Marc A. Hoy, having come to Laredo

from Beaumont in 1979. Hoy was followed by Mike Herrera.

The acquisition of several Texas properties by the Hearst Corporation included The Laredo Times in 1984.

The Times shifted from afternoon to morning publication, and thereafter Frank Bennack, the president of Hearst, chose a former colleague at the San Antonio Light, William B. Green, to leave the Edwardsville Intelligencer in Illinois to be the publisher and CEO of the Laredo Morning Times.

Green took over in 1986 in the midst of a brewing newspaper war between the Times and the Laredo News, a local family newspaper. The News subsequently ceased publication and the Times acquired the News' assets. More recently, a Nuevo Laredo daily launched an English version of the newspaper (the Laredo Sun) and published until it went away with another sunset.

Truly, the Laredo Morning Times has come a long way from that four-page publication James Saunders Penn and his workers organized with handset wooden and metal type.

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BOY SCOUTS | Continued from Page 1A

with his philosophies.

"It goes with my motto to have good alternatives so kids stay away from the gangs and drugs," he said. "You can see the number of kids it will impact is huge. We're talking about hundreds of kids in the Boy Scout program that this will benefit."

Sciaraffa, a former Police Activity League coordinator, said that despite participating in the ropes course at the sheriff's department, he had second thoughts about climbing the wall. But he did what most of the scouts did — swallowed his doubt and conquered the structure successfully.

Garza, recovering from knee surgery, had to sit out of the climbing, but he said the rock wall was the only one in South Texas.

"These are good for physical fitness, good for character, good

for what the Boy Scouts are all about, and good for the community overall," Garza said.

Although Garza said he never had the opportunity to be a Boy Scout, he said he lives vicariously through the boys who enjoy the rock wall today.

Juan Ramirez and Beto Moreno, both 9, were among the Bear Scouts scrambling up the wall on Tuesday, and proudly counted the number of times they had hit the red button at the top announcing their victory. Moreno and Ramirez named the water gun fights and rock wall among their favorite activities, denying any fear whatsoever of heights.

"Nobody here is afraid," Ramirez said, adding that he and Moreno were ready to take on the wall again.

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